DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 089 SP 033 855

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TITLE An Investigation of the Developmental Stages of Student Teachers in the Secondary Business Education Classroom.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business Education; Classroom Environment; Classroom Observation Techniques; Classroom Techniques; Collegiality; *Cooperating Teachers; *Developmental Continuity; Higher Education; Secondary Education; *Student Teacher Attitudes; Student Teacher Evaluation; *Student Teaching; Teacher Education Programs; Teacher Responsibility; Teacher Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the developmental process of seven student teachers as they: experienced the transition from preservice teacher education student to novice teacher; learned to work with students in the secondary classroom; and became cognizant of the problems related to dealing with teachers, students, and administrators. Data were gathered through daily videotaping of student teaching, which provided a record of interactions with students; fieldnotes; student teacher journals; and on-campus seminars. Results suggest that: student teachers learned to recognize teaching as an extremely complex endeavor; on-going positive critical evaluation was needed; developmental stages occurred sequentially; a good match between student and cooperating teacher is crucial; collegial support is necessary; and business education student teachers are knowledgeable in content areas, but appear less prepared to accept the multiple responsibilities of full-time teaching. An appended table presents major concerns of each participant as identified in daily journals. (LL)

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN THE SECONDARY BUSINESS EDUCATION CLASSROOM

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American Educational Research Association
1992 Annual Meeting

Session: SIG/Business Education and Information Systems Research

San Francisco, California
April 22, 1992

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Objectives

The purpose of the study was to look at the developmental process of student teachers as they experienced the transition from preservice teacher education student to novice teacher, learned to work with secondary students in the classroom and become cognizant of the problems related to dealing with teachers, students and administrators. The study examined the experience of becoming a teacher as perceived by seven business education student teachers as they engaged in student teaching. The intent of this research was to provide a practical view of the problems and concerns as described by the primary stakeholders--the student teachers themselves.

The questions that were studied included:

1. What were the problems and concerns of student teachers?

2. In what ways did these problems and concerns change during student teaching?

3. Were the student teachers cognizant of these changes?

4. Could they account for causes of these changes?

5. What did the student teachers discuss in terms of "commonplaces" or the core dimensions of the classroom?

6. What stage(s) of development did each student teacher exhibit?

Framing the Study

The initial framework for the study evolved from the stage developmental theories of Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall, Witherell (cognitive development), Kohlberg (social cognition), and Loevinger (ego development). Fuller's "teacher concerns" research indicated sequential stages in the teacher development process according to the dominant concern at a given time.

A second conceptual framework was Griffin's clinical teacher education study in which he suggested a comprehensive study more inclusive than studying only the student teaching component. Griffin used a multi-site, multi-method investigation of student teaching to describe the people, practices, and outcomes of student teaching with attention given to the characteristics of the participants, their interactions, and the nature of the contexts within which student teaching occurred. From those studies, seven categories referred to as "commonplaces" emerged. They were: curriculum planning, classroom management, instructional materials, instructional decision making, grouping of students, student evaluation and student assessment.

The third conceptual framework was the novice-to-expert studies of skill development conducted by Benner (1984), Dreyfus (1986), Berliner (1988) and Yinger (1989). Yinger found that the student teaching process includes a shift from the observer in the classroom or the "outsider" to the teaching phase where student teachers become "insiders."

Procedures

After an extensive review of literature dealing with student teachers and business education, the naturalistic methodology was selected as providing the multidimensional lenses needed to capture data about the development of student teachers. Because the study dealt with the changes in cognitive development and the resultant complexities of learning to teach, the methodology included the ideas, thoughts, feelings and actions of the student teachers themselves as the principal source of data for the study. The naturalistic inquiry approaches of observation, interviews, documentary analysis and videotaping of teaching episodes provided the means of capturing data.

Videotape. Throughout the data collection period, three video cameras were placed in three rooms where five student teachers would be spending most of their time--the accounting room, computer room, and office procedures laboratory. Daily videotaping of the student teachers provided a record of their interactions with the students.

Fieldnotes. Observations about teaching methods, planning, interaction with students and teachers provided information to substantiate the student teachers' actions on the videotapes.

Student teacher journals. Each student teacher prepared a daily journal of activities, thoughts, and concerns. The journals were anonymous so the student teachers were encouraged to be completely honest in their entries. The journals provided an avenue for the student teachers to share their ideas and, in return, questions were answered during the weekly student teacher seminars.

On-campus seminars. The student teachers met weekly on campus to discuss problems and issues from their classroom experiences. These sessions were audiotaped. There were semi-structured, two-hour sessions that allowed for maximum flexibility in uncovering problems and concerns. Since the basic premise of the study was to learn what was really happening in the student teaching experience, the problems were expected to arise from the student teachers' reactions to events in their daily activities in the school (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). This format followed the recommendation of Dexter (1970) by allowing the student teachers to make decisions about what information was important or critical to share.

Data Analysis

The results were analyzed by a modified constant comparative method with a two-stage approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The first stage involved analyzing transcripts of student teaching seminars and journals for incidents significant to each person. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to the process as 'unitizing'. These units would later serve as the basis for categorical definitions. The emergent unit coding list was used to develop categories from which to organize the data into a sensible, reportable form. The initial matrix utilized these coding areas: conditions, interactions,

strategies/tactics, consequences and the common problems of student teachers. The second stage involved prioritizing the categories according to frequency and credibility and later confirmed in the audit process.

The primary source of data analyzed were the transcripts from the student teachers' weekly seminars on campus. These typed transcripts provided a rich source of verbalized concerns and suggestions from the student teachers. Each tape was analyzed according to the framework developed for this study. While listening to each tape, speech inflection and emphasis provided additional meaning. The importance of transcripts of situations was emphasized by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

> . . . printed documents provide a stable source of information, both in the sense that they may accurately reflect situations that occurred. . .in the past. . .can be analyzed and reanalyzed without undergoing changes in the interim. . .they are a rich source of information, contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts they represent. Their richness includes the fact they appear in the natural language of the setting. . . they are often legally unassailable representing formal statements that satisfy some accountability requirements. . . they are nonreactive although what emanates from a records analysis still represents a kind of interaction between the sources and the analyzing investigator. (pp. 276-277)

The secondary level of data were the daily journals of the student teachers. These provided a record of questions or thoughts that were considered important by the student teacher at or near the time of occurrence. Many of these questions were discussed during the seminars in an effort to help the student teachers make decisions. Table 1 identified the major concerns of the student teachers and indicates a progression through Fuller's level of concerns for each person.

The third level of data were the videotaped teaching of the student teachers. These episodes were used to develop further insights into the student teachers' development as they conducted classes and worked with students. These data were used not included as part of the primary method of generating information; they were used during the audit process.

As part of the coding process, two experienced student teacher supervisors were asked to code sections of the tapes to establish interrater reliability. They also coded parts of the seminar transcripts and journal entries to further establish reliability.

Findings

Building upon Fuller's levels of concerns and Griffin's "commonplaces", twelve concerns emerged in the seminars and journals that influenced the student teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession. Those concerns were: discipline; instruction; classroom facilities/supplies; grading and evaluation; time managment; role transition; planning; classroom organization and management; cheating; questions about career choice; responsibility; and communication.

The major findings of the study indicate that:

1. Each student teacher intimated feelings of inadequacy in the preparation for teaching. The student teachers began to understand the complex nature of teaching.

2. There was development of practical knowledge regarding teaching by each student teacher. The student teachers, through reflection on their daily activities gradually developed a practical or "tacit" knowledge about teaching. Tacit knowledge is rarely verbalized but enable workers to meet the often unwritten and unspoken demands of the job.

3. Student teachers developed their individual "teacher persona." As they assumed the role of teacher, they became authoritative as well as sensitive to their students' needs. While developing confidence, they communicated with students in a professional role of teacher rather than as one student to another.

4. The student teachers developed common sense or as Buchmann (1984) prefers, the "practical wisdom of teaching." The concept of common sense in handling daily situations emerged as the student teachers talked about doing what they thought was right or appropriate for their classes. They began looking at teaching as a profession and criticized those actions of others they did not consider to be professional. They realized they were changing and maturing as they observed other teachers.

5. The student teachers developed a sense of collegiality. Because five student teachers were in one school, they shared concerns and helped each other with problems. They shared teaching ideas and materials and learned how to work as members of a team. This frequently evolved because the cooperating teachers were not available to answer questions.

6. The student teachers developed personal practical theories of teaching. They began making sense out of the activities they observed as well as understanding the relational aspects of daily lessons taught early in the year to capstone activities completed in the final weeks of the school year.

Conclusions

From the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Teaching is an extremely complex endeavor. From the first day in front of the class, student teachers began to recognize the simultaneous activities requiring decision-making by the teacher.

2. Student teachers want and need on-going positive critical evaluation to help them improve. They need constructive comments both in situation-specific settings as well as in the broader context.

3. Developmental stages occurred sequentially in each student teacher regardless of age.

4. The problem of match vs. mismatch between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher created problems and set up cognitive dissonance, especially for the student teacher. A good match between the two principal participants is crucial if a positive experience is to occur.

5. There is a need for collegial support to help each student teacher develop into enthusiastic novice teacher.

6. Business education student teachers are knowledgeable in their content areas. However, they appear less prepared to accept the multiple responsibilities of full-time teaching.

7. Nonsupervision by the cooperating teachers sent mixed signals to the student teachers. While the cooperating teachers were indicating their confidence in the student teachers to control various situations, the student teachers perceived these actions as negligence on the part of the cooperating teachers.

Implications of the Study

The conclusions drawn from this study indicate needed areas of study and improvement in teacher education; business teacher education; and curriculum.

In the area of teacher education, cooperating teachers should receive some instruction about working with student teachers through an in-service program or meetings with the university supervisor. Likewise, the university should provide training for university supervisors in classroom observation techniques, conference procedures as well as evaluation techniques. Both the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor can positively or negatively influence future teachers in many ways not indicated in this study.

Business teacher education programs should not only teach the skills necessary for the business education classroom, but should integrate more general teaching techniques. For many years, business education has emphasized skills development and how to teach the skills. Now, business education should emphasize working with academics and teach prospective teachers how to integrate concepts from all disciplines into the business education classroom.

In the area of curriculum, teacher educators should review the sequencing and content of courses prior to student teaching. Student teachers in the study often indicated they were not taught certain concepts in the methods or professional education courses. The curriculum should provide for review of concepts nearer to application in the classroom.

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Table 1. Major Concerns of Student Teachers Identified Through Daily Journals

Session (Week) / Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jennifer	Questions if teaching is for her Reading about computers before teaching them Felt overwhelmed and frightened Class management How to answer students' questions	Moved students who were loud Recognizes need for experience Began teaching Took over study hall	Revised teaching plans before school Hesitated to assign graded homework; hates to grade Spends up to 4 hours working at night to prepare Discipline--sent three students out of study hall	Students taken from classes tired of making adjustments for them Bad attitudes of students Grading Attempted to introduce new material--problems with students nor understanding/not listening	Lack of communication with cooperating teacher Tired of grading Frequently has to change lesson plans Believes students are beginning to trust her	Confused; trying to get everything done on time Feels pressure--students' grading own work preparation for classes	Classes working hard Pleasant students Counting--4 weeks/ 3 days Continue to build rapport with students Questions self--is she too easy on students?? Preparing teaching applications Too hot!!/Kids don't care!	Bad attitudes of students-"snippy" Had to adjust plans Lack of student motivation in business law Bored with herself--she recognized problem Overloaded with grading	Ready for school to end End of year banquet Noticed difference in grade levels--"hyper" freshman "Can't wait till it's over." Doubts about going into teaching	Equipment breakdowns Student frustration--end of year Cooperating teacher not around to help Other teachers 'watching' for mistakes
Susan	Nervous Transition after spring break Student/teacher conflicts Communication with students Observed individualized class--decided this kind of class was not for her "Information overload"	Began teaching Good rapport with students and cooperating teacher Students accept her Well prepared to teach Exhaustion!!	Began to think of ways to approach computer problems so students could do problems at own rate Needs supplemental material	Gaining confidence Fewer discipline problems Attended school play--saw students in different environment	Students asking questions Students did well on her test Works through problems to find trouble spots and to determine time to complete	Students working individually on practice sets	Frustrated with seniors who don't care about school	Lessons prepared in advance Grading practice sets--boring/tedious	Adjusted class schedule for senior activities Flexibility	Relief--it's over!!
Dana	Began teaching typewriting practice set--first day Observed cooperating teacher's lecture style--center of room	Teaching more classes Talked with irate parents Problems with beginning class; keep on task	Learning about student characteristics/ work habits Problems with explaining certain typing assignments	Time management--what to do when finish early Strength--prepares lots of handouts Value of review/ reinforcement in student learning	Discipline Building rapport Class' physical layout--students spread out; difficult to maintain attention	Discipline Sent two students to vice-principal who gave them 5-day detentions	Has to "juggle" assignments Beginning to ask lots of questions to get students involved in class	Good class interaction/ discussion Good rapport/typing class Had a quiz prepared; but did not give it because of time Grading Problems with group work; how to grade fairly Communication with cooperating teacher	Kids talking during class Notes all classes are working on practice sets. Little planning for teacher. Grading "Spring fever" Objectives are being met Discipline is main problem	Attitude improved Tries not to transfer bad attitude from one class to the next Decided to lighten workload on seniors Noted "going away" party from class/gift/cake Hectic schedule--have to complete everything!

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Table 1. Continued

Session (Week) / Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Beverly	Nervous, apprehensive Have to get used to class schedule Problems with students in study hall; they don't bring homework to do	Began teaching Ran out of material/ time remained Interruptions/ announcements are problem Planning ahead Rapport with students	Doesn't like giving hall passes--sees this as being the "bad guy" Feels rushed to get everything done Confidence improving	Learning to adjust lesson plans Wants to get into a routine Frustrated with lack of attention from students	Flexibility Learning to write on board Needs to learn how to tell if students understand (non-verbal indicators)	How to explain two-page report Bogged down with grading Lack of communication with cooperating teacher Tired of not being informed about faculty meetings, etc. How to change lecture to active discussion with student involvement	Needs confidence in her teaching Grading!	Doesn't want to reprimand students in study hall Depressed--feels like she is running out of creative ideas	Upset about poor student evaluations Learning not to take things seriously	Spent time observing others watched teaching styles
Andrea	Few discipline problems Tries to keep "subtle" control Questions about grading Began teaching typewriting	Difficult to tell how long students need for assignments Taking over class Class seems bored Frustration with planning	Planning is time consuming Hesitant to plan in unfamiliar areas, i.e., telephone techniques Hours of grading and planning	Activities becoming routine Frustrated with classes Typing easier to teach than accounting Confidence growing	"Learn how to teach" need experience Lesson organization/ presentation	First period--difficult to have good discussion Have to anticipate problems Be more problems	Learn how to assign points to different parts of test Additional review for EMR students	High expectations for good test scores Confidence in explaining assignments Need to be better organized so students have most productive time Flexible Relate class to actual jobs	Completing accounting projects Grading Failure to develop effective class discussion Keeping students' attention Use of chalkboard	Improved rapport Figuring grades--fairness Hectic end of the quarter--projects to grade Time

Table 1. Continued

Session (Week) / Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Melissa	Nervous Talked with cooperating teacher Apprehensive about unit plan Note age difference between her and students	Strict discipline Students asked for help Tired Doesn't like idea of temporary, wants permanent job	Teaching Good rapport with students Frustrated repeating instructions Kids don't listen	Doesn't like leaving students with substitute Attended coordinators' meeting Realizes problems between regular teachers and COE coordinators	Anxious to end year Learning how to break job down into small steps, i.e., typing tables	Grading Difficult getting students to listen	Beginning to think of students as "my" students	Discipline Grading Senses distance between herself and faculty and students Wants to get student teaching over with	Frustrated with student attitudes/ behaviors Teaching going well Discipline	Grading
Barbara	Discussed plans with cooperating teacher Methods courses didn't prepare her for these classes Frustration with students Socializing with teachers Worked with Chinese student in shorthand Cooperating teacher says don't worry about kids--it's up to them	Swamped with paperwork Claims student teaching is not realistic Flexibility Hectic schedule Began to teach personal finance	Began teaching shorthand Concern with review before teaching Assisted with standardized testing Bomb threat to school Gaining confidence in front of class Good communication with cooperating teacher	Organized, prepared shorthand syllabus for remainder of year Discipline Students not interested in passing tests Students don't cooperate with regular teacher	Discipline Class management Changed seating Felt she has no control over students	Difficult getting material ahead of time Cooperating teacher won't let her add new information to units Students taking advantage Disrespectful/ talkative	Begin telling student of her expectations Discipline	Discipline No tardy policy in school	Grading	Bored, nothing to do Grading papers